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SUBJECT Port Data: Emmahaven (Port of Padang)
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DATE OF INFORMATION

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1. History of the Port

After the discovery of extensive coal fields, about 40 miles inland from the coast of West Sumatra, the problem of transport became acute. The only way of distribution through the Archipelago was by means of ships, and so the idea of building a harbor was born. Two natural bays, the Taroesan and Koninginnebay, were favorably situated for the purpose. The choice fell on the Koninginnebay, only five miles from the old city of Padang. In 1890 the work started by sheltering the NE part of the Koninginnebay with a 900 metre break water, and the harbor was called "Emma-haven" after the reigning Queen of the Netherlands, Emma, grandmother of the present Queen Juliana. The opening of the Emmahaven, being the only sheltered harbor on the one thousand sea-mile long West Coast of Sumatra, gave new life to the old city of Padang. Commercial and industrial interest was awakened, and soon regular shipping called at Emmahaven. Besides the interinsular shipping company (KPM), the Dutch, German, British and Japanese liners called at Emmahaven. Until 1924, when East Sumatra (by favorable development of tobacco and rubber estates) took over her place as the first harbor of Sumatra through the port of Belawan-Deli, Emmahaven was rated among the five biggest harbors of the Dutch East Indian ports. The last year before the Japanese occupation, 450 vessels with a volume of one million tons called at Emmahaven. In 1949, 150 vessels with 300 thousand ton volume called there.

2. Entrance

In the British as well as the Dutch Sailing Directions, the various routes are described for entering the roads of Emmahaven. Pilotage is compulsory, and a pilot motorboat will meet the ship in due time. There are no obstructions in the entering routes. Anchorage for any type of vessel is safe outside the 20 metre line, good anchor ground and no danger of abnormal weather conditions. The entrance to the harbor and berths by LWS with a draft of 27 feet is possible. Ocean-going vessels of the Victory, C2 or C3 type can be berthed without any danger to vessel or jetties. There are four corrugated iron sheds and one concrete warehouse, floor space of each about one thousand square metres. Jetties I, II, III, and IV are for handling of general cargo. Jetty VI is connected with the old storage plant

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of BPM. Ships can obtain bunkers with a capacity of 50 tons per hour. Water is obtainable at the rate of 25 tons an hour at jetties II, III, IV and VIII. Jetty VIII was the former coal pier: the output of coal is still not high enough for export, so this pier has been altered to handle packed petroleum and explosives, replacing pierhead VII which was ruined by the Japanese. Plans for the restoration of pier VII are in progress, and within a few months petroleum in bulk can be handled again. The main export is cement of a very good quality, ten thousand tons a month (peace-time capacity 20 thousand tons).

3. Export

Besides this cement, repacked native products as rubber, coffee, copra, cassia-vera and cloves are the principal export products. Before the Japanese invasion, three thousand tons of tea was exported from the biggest tea estate of Indonesia, "Kajoe Aroe," situated about 80 miles south of Padang. This estate is being rebuilt since May 1949 and insiders are expecting the first shipments in 1950.

4. Import

Formerly the main food (rice) had to be imported, but since 1940 the West Coast is self-supporting. Hardware, textiles, iron ware, tools and all kinds of packed food must be imported.

5. Cargo Handling

Ships are moored alongside the wood-covered jetties and load and discharge with their own ship's gear. Only one of the original two moving cranes on jetties I, II and III can be used for lifts, not exceeding six tons. The sheds are on the land side in immediate connection with the railways to Padang, Fort Kock and Sawaloentoh (the mining district). There is no lighterage or tugboat service.

6. During the Japanese invasion much was destroyed (see wreck on photo) by bombing the jetties and sheds. Alongside jetty I, laying underwater, is the bombed KPM steamer "Buyskes," rendering about 200 feet of this jetty out of use. While more important ports, as Tandjong Priok, Macassar, Belawan-Deli and Surabaya, claimed all available salvage material, nothing has been done for this harbor directly. Nevertheless, Emmahaven is important enough for future attendance, this port to be considered as the stock-harbor of the largest part of the West Coast of Sumatra and off-laying islands. The main thing is the reopening of the Republican Territory by means of coastal trade. Five or six coasters of 100 tons, operated by a well-organized company, would be highly favored by the Indonesian native shippers of cargo, returning this port to its prewar importance.

[Available for inspection and selection at the Graphics Register are two photographs of the harbor of Emmahaven; one is an aerial photograph and the other is a view of the harbor showing several wrecked ships. The photographs were probably taken in 1949.]

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